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NAVY MEDICINE IN FOCUS

Zero tolerance for Sexual Assault

BY VJOHNSON – APRIL 10, 2014
POSTED IN: NEWS

By Jason Bortz, Naval Hospital Pensacola Public Affairs

April is Sexual Assault Awareness Month (SAAM) and the DoD theme for this year is “Live Our Values: Step Up to Stop Sexual Assault.”

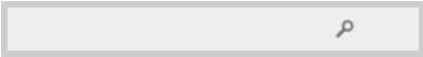
Sexual assault awareness does not start and stop in April, but SAAM is an opportunity for the DoD to reinforce its efforts to prevent and eliminate sexual assault.

“Sexual assault is a crime and affects not only the victims, but the entire command,” said Cmdr. Marc Jasek, sexual assault forensic nurse program manager, Naval Hospital Pensacola.



Lt. Cmdr. Andreas Stiller, nurse practitioner, Naval Hospital Pensacola, practices performing a forensic exam on a mock sexual assault victim under the supervision of Cmdr. Marc Jasek, sexual assault forensic medical program manager, Naval Hospital Pensacola (NHP). Throughout the month of April, which is Sexual Assault Awareness Month, NHP will be hosting several events to increase awareness of sexual assault. (Photo courtesy of Naval Hospital Pensacola)

Naval Hospital Pensacola takes an active role in preventing and educating Sailors about sexual assault. Leadership at the hospital has worked to create a climate of trust and professionalism



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that does not tolerate sexual assault, sexual harassment nor sexism.

“We encourage our Sailors to stop sexual assault and protect each other,” said Jasek. “We need everyone to be committed to creating an environment where sexual harassment, sexual assaults and sexist behaviors are not tolerated.”

Despite all of the emphasis placed on sexual assault prevention and response by the DoD, sexual assault still occurs. In 2012, there were over 3,000 reports of sexual assault involving service members.

“One case of sexual assault is too many,” said Jasek. “No one, male or female, should have to be a victim of sexual assault. There is no place for sexual assault in the Navy or any workplace.”

Education on sexual assault and the reporting process will continue to be emphasized to reduce the number of sexual assaults and eventually reach the goal of eliminating them all together. To reach this goal, the entire DoD community needs to be committed to removing sexual assault entirely, which includes reporting incidents.

“Victims of sexual assault are often reluctant to report them,” said Jasek. “They may feel embarrassed or fear retaliation. Even worse, they may fear the command won’t believe or support them, but leadership here supports anyone filing a report.”

Victims of sexual assault have the choice of filing unrestricted or restricted reports. Restricted reports can be made to a victim advocate and while services such as counseling and medical treatment are offered, the victim’s command is not notified and participating in a criminal investigation is optional. An unrestricted report initiates an official investigation and the victim’s command authorities are immediately notified. Restricted reports can be changed to unrestricted, but a victim cannot change an unrestricted to restricted.

“Whether a person chooses to file an unrestricted or restricted report, the important thing is to file a report so they can receive the care they need.”



Lt. Sarah Wade, division officer, Ear Nose and Throat Clinic, and Lt. Cmdr. Andreas Stiller, nurse practitioner, both with Nava Hospital Pensacola, practice performing a forensic exam on a mock sexual assault victim at the hospital. (Photo courtesy of Naval Hospital Pensacola)

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To report an incident of sexual assault, please contact the SAFE Helpline at 877-995-5247.



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